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Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Letter dated 29 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Ambassadorial Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in New York, I have the honour to convey that the Group held an emergency meeting on Friday, 25 March 2011, to discuss the despicable act of the burning of a copy of the Holy Koran by two pastors, following a mock trial in a church on 20 March 2011 in Florida, United States of America.

This provocative act, which has hurt the sentiments of the 1.5 billion Muslims of the world, was strongly condemned by the OIC Group as an act of advocacy of incitement to religious hatred, discrimination and violence against Islam and Muslims. The OIC Ambassadors urged the international community in general and you in particular to openly and strongly condemn this act of extreme bigotry and religious hatred.

I am enclosing the text of the statement issued by the OIC Ambassadorial Group in New York on this subject, with a request for circulation to the entire United Nations membership (see annex).

As you will see in the statement, the OIC Ambassadorial Group called upon you, as well as reiterated the call made by the OIC Group in Geneva to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to express unequivocal condemnation of the insidious desecration of the holy book of Islam and show action-oriented leadership to tackle the growing manifestations of religious intolerance and discrimination and incitement to hatred and violence based on religion.

The OIC Group strongly believes that the United Nations has an important role to play in ensuring peace and harmony among the peoples and nations of the world. Accordingly, in your capacity as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, we expect you to take the necessary steps to fight such insidious tendencies, to protect

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multiculturalism and promote peace and harmony that are fundamental to the peaceful coexistence of mankind.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68 (b), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sirodjidin **Aslov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 29 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in New York strongly condemns the sacrilegious act of burning of the Holy Koran in Florida as an act of advocacy of incitement to religious hatred, discrimination and violence

25 March 2011

The Ambassadorial Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the United Nations, New York, at an emergency meeting convened today, expressed its strong condemnation of the despicable act of the burning of a copy of the Koran by Pastors Wayne Sapp and Terry Jones in Gainesville, Florida, United States of America, on 20 March 2011. Calling it an act of extremists guided by their hatred towards other cultures and religions, the OIC Group regretted that it took place in a church, a sacred place itself, reserved for prayers and remembrance of God.

The OIC Group shared the disappointment and concern expressed by the Secretary-General of the OIC over this reprehensible act of extreme bigotry, which has severely hurt the feelings of 1.5 billion Muslims all over the world, and cautioned that if necessary conditions were not created by the international community to prevent a recurrence of such Islamophobic acts, it would have grave repercussions over interfaith harmony as well as global peace, security and stability.

The Group urged the international community to unanimously condemn these acts that are clear examples of advocacy of incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence based on religion. It was further highlighted that such acts, when left unattended, provide fuel to extremist thoughts and elements in different societies that lead to undermining peaceful coexistence and harmony among peoples and societies. While appreciating the condemnatory statement issued by the United States in the general debate of the Human Rights Council on 22 March 2011 and other statements by interfaith and community leaders in the United States, the Group hoped that the United States Administration would take appropriate actions against the perpetrators of these acts in accordance with its national and international obligations.

The OIC Group also called upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to express their unequivocal condemnation of the insidious desecration of the holy book of Islam and show action-oriented leadership to tackle the growing problem of religious intolerance, discrimination and incitement to hatred and violence based on religion and belief.

The Group stated that at a time when Muslims around the world continue to be confronted with ever-increasing instances of intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination and violence on the basis of their religion, the OIC-sponsored resolution adopted by consensus on 24 March 2011 by the Human Rights Council in Geneva, entitled "Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief", should be seen as the confirmation of the sincere commitment of OIC to the promotion of a global culture of respect,

tolerance and peace among all, irrespective of religious and cultural backgrounds and traditions.

OIC Ambassadors further reiterated the strong commitment of OIC to the promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue and the need to preserve the multicultural fabric of our societies that is fundamental to peaceful coexistence among peoples, cultures and nations.